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CONTENTS

South Vietnam: Situation report. (Page 1)

East Germany - Berlin: The harassment yesterday
is probably typical of what is to come. (Page 2)

Arab States - Israel: Israel will almost certainly
retaliate for yesterday's attack on its airliner.
(Page 3)

Communist China: The Chinese have indefinitely
deferred meeting with the US in Warsaw. (Page 4)

SECRET

SECRET




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SECRET

【South Vietnam: Ground action in South Vietnam was light on 17-18 February. Major Communist forces maneuvered to avoid wide-ranging allied sweep operations and B-52 strikes.

US aircrews have reported more than 100 secondary explosions and fires resulting from 11 recent B-52 strikes targeted against the Viet Cong 5th Division north of Saigon in War Zone D, a good indicator of the magnitude of the enemy's logistics buildup there over the past several weeks. It appears that the heavy bombing runs may have at least temporarily eased the threat to the major allied military complex at Bien Hoa - Long Binh, the reported objective of the 5th Division.  (Map)】

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East Germany - Berlin: Pankow's action in delaying traffic leaving West Berlin yesterday is probably typical of the harassment it will resort to as the date for the West German Federal Assembly meeting approaches.

East German checkpoint officials at the West Berlin end of the city's major access route, the Berlin-Helmstedt autobahn, apparently deliberately slowed down for about 12 hours the processing of vehicles moving outbound to West Germany. Travelers inbound from the Federal Republic using that road were not affected. Western press reports indicated, however, that some trucks using other routes into the city were delayed. Political motives rather than weather conditions prompted the delays; the East Germans did not claim that the large amount of snow still present on the roads caused the slowdown in processing.

Pankow is aware that Bonn can do little to counteract this type of limited and temporary harassment, and the East Germans probably will resort frequently to this and similar measures in order to advertise their displeasure over the assembly session on 5 March. Stronger measures by the East Germans, however, cannot be ruled out.

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Arab States - Israel: Israel almost certainly will retaliate for yesterday's Arab commando attack on its airliner in Zurich.

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The Popular Front for the Liberation of Palestine has claimed credit for this latest attack, as it did in December. The Front's military headquarters are in Jordan; it has political offices in Jordan, Syria, and Lebanon.

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Communist China: The Chinese have indefinitely deferred meeting with the US in Warsaw.

They informed the US Embassy yesterday that the meeting is impossible because the US Government had recently incited Peking's former chargeé [] to betray his country and had taken him to the US. [] defected on 24 January.

The Chinese Communists charged that the US plans to send [] to Taiwan in order to create additional anti-China incidents. They assert that this once again reveals the "vicious features" of the new administration "which has inherited the mantle of the preceding US governments."

Although Peking had warned the US on 6 February of possible "serious consequences" if [] were not returned, it appears that the Chinese are using the defection as a pretext to call off the scheduled meeting. The decision appears to have been a sudden one and may reflect new disagreement among the leadership in Peking. The Chinese protest over [] on 6 February--which in effect admitted that the US was not responsible--suggested that they did not intend to carry the matter further.

Recent Chinese actions have suggested that Peking did not intend to make any proposals at Warsaw that would contribute to significant improvement in Sino-US relations. During the past month, the Chinese have launched a particularly bitter barrage of anti-American propaganda and a series of virulent attacks on President Nixon.

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